

What is claimed is:

1. A latch-release apparatus for use with a fifth-wheel hitch mechanism,
5 comprising:
 a first rigid metal bar having a first end, a second end, and an outside
 diameter;
 a metal ring having an inside diameter greater than the outside
 diameter of the metal bar, surrounding the rigid bar, contacting and welded
10 to the rigid bar between the first and second ends, leaving an open region on
 a side of the metal bar opposite the weld; and
 a rigid metal hooking rod having a first and a second end, attached
 by a bent loop on the first end through the open region of the ring welded to
 the rigid bar, the hooking rod having a bent hook at the second end away
15 from the attachment to the ring welded to the rigid bar, the bent hook for
 engaging a fifth-wheel release handle.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the rigid metal bar is one of a length of
20 steel pipe or a length of aluminum tubing.
3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the hooking rod is one of a solid steel
rod or a solid aluminum rod.
4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the rigid metal bar and the hooking rod
25 are both steel, and are both zinc-plated.
5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the rigid metal bar is either powder-
coated or painted.

6. A release apparatus for use with a fifth-wheel hitch mechanism on a towing vehicle, comprising:

a first rigid metal bar having a first end, a second end, and an outside diameter, the rigid metal bar attached to a universal joint further attached to a frame member of a vehicle proximate the fifth-wheel mechanism;

a metal ring having an inside diameter greater than the outside diameter of the metal bar, surrounding the rigid bar, contacting and welded to the rigid bar between the first and second ends, leaving an open region on a side of the metal bar opposite the weld; and

a rigid metal hooking rod having a first and a second end, attached by a bent loop on the first end through the open region of the ring welded to the rigid bar, the hooking rod having a bent hook at the second end away from the attachment to the ring welded to the rigid bar, the bent hook for engaging a release handle of the fifth-wheel mechanism.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the rigid metal bar is one of a length of steel pipe or a length of aluminum tubing.

8. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the hooking rod is one of a solid steel rod or a solid aluminum rod.

9. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the rigid metal bar and the hooking rod are both steel, and are both zinc-plated.

10. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the rigid metal bar is either powder-coated or painted.